

## Sheep Trails in Nebraska

(Continued from Third Page.)

men are most of the time on foot. From dawn till dark they slowly proceed with calls of "hoosha, hoosha, yah, yah," these expressions being considered indispensable in sheep driving, mingled with the bleating of sheep and mauling of young lambs.

A typical sheep-herder (they are only called shepherds in poems) is not talkative, but he possesses a good deal of quiet watchfulness, of patience with sheepish stupidity and tenderness with helpless lambs. His eyes are squinted with the bright light and long distances of the prairie, his face grimed with dust and his lips cracked and blistered with wind and alkali. The greatest hardship of the trail

which send a shiver down the sheep herder's back and remind him that the owl is a bird of ill-omen. Experienced trailmen own that the owls and coyotes together give them a sort of "creepy" feeling.

The greatest danger to the flock is in fording streams. If they are thirsty they may rush into the water and climb over each other. Sheep can smell water a half-mile distant, and if very thirsty they will stampede and rush into the water, and if it is at all deep many are sure to be drowned. When not thirsty they dislike to cross a stream and have to be forced into it. The men carry or tow some of them across and the others will follow. The hardest driving is after they have entered a line of bluffs, which lie along one side of most Nebraska streams. The hills are very steep and inaccessible at many points and the

experience. Low, flat tents are sometimes provided as shelter from rain and hail, but the hail storms come on so suddenly there is not often time to get the flock to shelter.

The fleece grows rapidly when the sheep are on grass and when about an inch of clean new growth shows next to the skin underneath the dingy winter coat the shearing begins. When it is over the flock seems to have been transformed, so changed is their appearance. In years past it was the custom to take small flocks to a stream and wash the fleece before shearing, but in the great western flocks this is impracticable and unnecessary as well. The wool is very oily and holds a quantity of dirt and dust. The hands, arms and even the bodies of the shearers, for they work lightly clothed, glisten with the black grease. A close inspection of a big cargo of wool and an ac-

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ON THE SHEEP TRAIL.

is the dust. In dry weather the cloud of dust following the flock looks like the smoke of a prairie fire. The men's faces grow black with it. Sometimes there is water to wash with at "grub time," sometimes there is none, but there is no complaint. There may be good water to drink or they may have to take water from ponds "thick enough to carry in a gunny sack," but the sheepman takes it all as a part of the routine. At night he lays his tarpaulin on the ground and crawling into it sleeps the sleep of the weary. If it rains he pulls the flap over his head and snores peacefully.

When the flock has left civilization beyond, the howl of the coyote is heard through the night. When the trailmen are wrapped up in their blankets, leaving one man to watch and make a circuit of the flock at intervals and the intense stillness of the prairie at night has settled over the

sheep scatter up and down the deep canyons, lured by the tempting, juicy grasses. Many weary miles are traversed and volumes of lurid profanity expended before the flock is safely gathered on the range selected as the summer camp.

The ewes are then divided into smaller flocks, that they may be more easily handled and be sure of equal opportunity for grazing. When the lambs begin to come they must be given individual attention. A central camp is chosen, where the cook prepares the meals and which serves as a general headquarters. Usually a tent is used, but sometimes there is a ranch house near enough that a part of it or some outbuilding may be used, with a privilege of sleeping in the barn. But while the "lambling" is in progress the men stay with the flocks night and day, taking what rest they can in the tarpaulin or little "dog tent." But the hours of sleep are short

quaintance with its never-to-be-forgotten odor will tend to dispel the idea of its "divine right" in the matter of sanitary underclothing. The friend of cotton can produce very damaging evidence against wool. However, this dirt and grease is all removed at the scouring mills and the wool made as white as snow before it goes to the great spinning and weaving mills, where it is converted into manufactured products. In this connection it may be noted that while many thousands of sheep are clipped every year in Nebraska there are as yet practically no mills for either scouring or manufacturing the wool. The wool clip, which adds very materially to the profits of the sheep industry, is sacked and hauled to the nearest shipping station. It may be sold when shipped or consigned to a commission firm for storage to wait for a rise in price.

The ewes and lambs remain on the range as long as grass is good. When September drouth and the first frosts have tinged the grass with brown the flock, nearly doubled in numbers, is started toward the location selected as a feeding station, where corn is abundant, and placed in the feed yards to fatten for market. Along in January the lambs dropped in May on the western grasslands are speeding along toward Omaha by special trains on fast freight time, fifty miles an hour.

M. B. DAVIS.

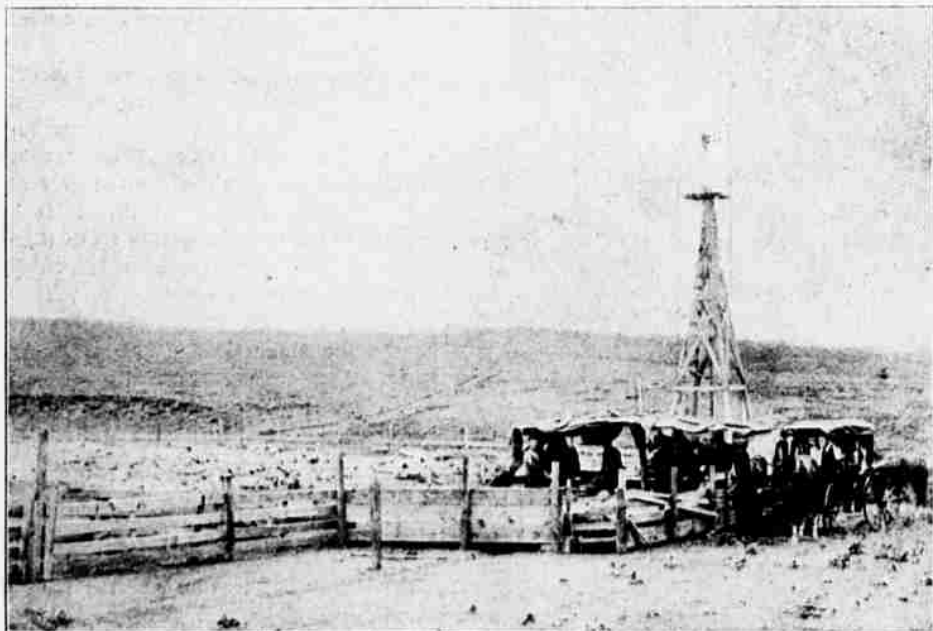
## Cost of a Church Carpet

The Chicago Advance gives the following estimate of the direct and collateral cost of a church carpet. The price was \$800, but as the women of the church raised the money by giving entertainments the pastor's estimate was that when all the items of cost were figured in the carpet had cost fully \$4,000. He reached this astonishing total by estimating the work, worry, nervous strain, bodily weariness and heartaches of 100 women; the heroic efforts of men, women and children to eat things which were to be eaten, and hear, see or buy things which had been provided to extract money from them; the colds, fevers and other ailments contracted while attending the entertainments and the consequent doctor's bills; the money spent in other churches, for if they come to your entertainment you must go to theirs; and, worst and most costly of all, the demoralization of the church and the curtailment of the legitimate giving which follow in the train of such methods of raising money. But they got their carpet.

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SHEEP SHEARING.

camp, the distant "kiyi" of the coyote sounds out with startling distinctness. The first is answered by others, now on one side now on the other, as these denizens of the canyons move stealthily about, attracted by the smell of sheep and the chance of a meal of mutton. Sometimes they succeed in napping a luckless ewe from the edge of the flock, in spite of the watcher's vigilance. They have appeared in unusual numbers this year, and some men on their first trail have decided to come back before getting very far from home. They will have to stand some guying in the feed yards next winter because of being "scared out by coyotes last summer." These gaunt prairie wolves never attack man, but their howling at night sounds dismal enough. The little gray prairie owls add to the eeriness of the night with their weird cries.

and they take turns at meal time to gallop away for a hasty meal and back as soon as possible. During a rainy spring the men suffer real hardship, for then the lambs require most attention. They must see that the ewes own their lambs, that little weaklings are not chilled to death in the rain, or, if the mother has no nourishment, as sometimes happens, borrow from another. Often a lamb apparently dead is wrapped in a blanket and revived by pouring a little warm milk down its throat. They are very tender little creatures when first born, seemingly with little vitality, for a slight accident will cause their death. Half sometimes kills great numbers, and in selecting range inquiry is made as to whether or not it lies in a hall belt, the theory being that hall visits only certain sections. This theory, however, is not altogether borne out by